

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 11, 15, 20-23 and 25-32 are pending. No claim amendments were made at this time.

1-10 (Canceled)

11. (Previously presented) A backing plate for use in a friction assembly for a brake, the friction assembly comprising a brake pad which includes the backing plate and a friction material, the backing plate comprising:

- a friction supporting surface for supporting the friction material for producing friction when the brake is in use;

- a back surface opposite to the friction supporting surface, the back surface being adapted to receive a noise damping shim; and

- a first coupler member formed on the back surface for engaging with a second coupler member formed on the noise damping shim, the second coupler member having a rim defining a hole to couple the noise damping shim with the backing plate, the first coupler member having:

- a stem adapted to be received in the hole of the second coupler member, the stem having a connection end where the stem is connected to the backing plate and a distal end opposite to the connection end, the stem having a height and an enlarged section having a larger-cross section, wherein the enlarged section is near the distal end of the stem and engages the rim of the second coupler member to prevent disengagement of the shim from the backing plate upon assembly;

- a recess surrounding the stem to accept the rim of the second coupler member, the recess having a depth defined by an opening mouth and a bottom,

- wherein the height of the stem is less than the depth of the recess such that the distal end of the stem remains within the recess prior to and after coupling of the first and second coupler members.

12-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) The backing plate as claimed in claim 11, wherein the stem of the first coupler member is deformed to form the enlarged section prior to assembly of the frictional assembly such that upon assembly of the backing plate, the second coupler member will be attached to the first coupler member by snap fitting the first and second coupler members together.

16-19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously presented) A method of assembling a friction system for a brake having a noise dampening shim, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a first coupler member comprising a stem having a region with an enlarged cross-section positioned near a distal end of the stem and a recess surrounding the stem on a back surface of a backing plate for a friction assembly, the friction assembly having:

a friction pad for producing friction when the brake is in use; and

the backing plate having a friction supporting surface for supporting the friction pad and the back surface opposite to the friction supporting surface,

wherein the stem has a height between the distal end and a connection end where the stem is connected to the backing plate, the recess has a depth defined by an opening mouth and a bottom, and the height of the stem is less than the depth of the recess such that the distal end of the stem is within the recess;

providing a second coupler member having a rim defining a hole on the noise dampening shim, the noise dampening shim adapted for engagement with the back surface of the backing plate; and

snapping in the enlarged section of the stem of the first coupler member into the hole of the second coupler member so that the enlarged section of the stem engages the rim of the hole to couple the noise dampening shim with the backing plate.

21. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 20, wherein:

the step for providing the second coupler member provides the hole with an enlarged section; and

the snapping step forces the enlarged section of the stem of the first coupler member into the enlarged section of the hole of the second coupler member so that the enlarged section of the stem of the first coupler member secures the first coupler member and the second coupler member.

22. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 20, wherein:

the step of providing the first coupler member forms the stem such that a distal end of the stem remains within the recess.

23. (Previously presented) A backing plate for use in a friction assembly for a brake, the backing plate comprising:

a friction supporting surface for supporting a friction material; and

a back surface opposite to the friction supporting surface for coupling with a noise-dampening shim having a rim defining a hole extending from the surface of the shim, the back surface having:

a stem adapted to be received in the hole of the shim, the stem having a connection end where the stem is connected to the backing plate and a distal end opposite to the connection end, the distal end having an enlarged section with a larger cross-section than the remainder of the stem, wherein the enlarged section of the stem of the backing plate is adapted for press-fitting into the hole of the shim to couple the shim to the backing plate; and

a recess surrounding the stem, the recess having a depth defined by an opening mouth and a bottom,

wherein the height of the stem is less than the depth of the recess.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously presented) A friction assembly for a brake, the friction assembly comprising:

the backing plate according to claim 23 having a friction material affixed onto the friction supporting surface; and

a noise-dampening shim coupled to the stem of the backing plate.

26. (Previously presented) The backing plate as claimed in claim 11, wherein the first coupler member is integrally formed with the backing plate.

27. (Previously presented) The backing plate as claimed in claim 11, wherein:

the rim of the second coupler member has a tubular section having a first rim diameter, and a connection section having a second rim diameter which is larger than the first rim diameter; and

the enlarged section of the stem of the first coupler member has a stem diameter which is larger than the first rim diameter of the tubular section of the rim of the second coupler member so as to secure engagement between the first and second coupler members.

28. (Previously presented) The backing plate as claimed in claim 11, wherein the enlarged section of the stem of the first coupler member is formed as an enlarged head that is slanted from the distal end of the stem.

29. (Previously presented) The backing plate as claimed in claim 23, wherein:

the rim of the shim has a tubular section having a first rim diameter, and a connection section having a second rim diameter which is larger than the first rim diameter; and

the enlarged section of the stem of the backing plate has a stem diameter which is larger than the first rim diameter of the tubular section of the rim of the shim so as to secure engagement between the backing plate and the shim.

30. (Previously presented) The backing plate as claimed in claim 23, wherein the enlarged section of the stem is formed as an enlarged head that is slanted from the distal end of the stem.

31. (Previously presented) The friction assembly as claimed in claim 25, wherein: the shim has a rim defining a hole to couple with the stem of the backing plate, and the rim has a tubular section having a first rim diameter, and a connection section having a second rim diameter which is larger than the first rim diameter; and the enlarged section of the stem of the backing plate has a stem diameter which is larger than the first rim diameter of the tubular section of the rim of the shim so as to secure engagement between the backing plate and the shim.

32. (Previously presented) The friction assembly as claimed in claim 25, wherein the enlarged section of the stem is formed as an enlarged head that is slanted from the distal end of the stem.